

The Beginning

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Author: ThatPersonYouMightKnow

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Summary: Simba and the remaining members of the now-dead Pride Lands plan a daring robbery. They just didn't count on some psychotic creatures hunting them down...

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: The Hunger Problem

AN: Welcome back, everyone! Here we are, at the beginning of the final series of *The Lion King Adventures*. I bet you've all been wanting to know what's happened to Simba, Nala and Haiba after the events of the previous finale. Well, look no further. This is the first chapter of *The Beginning*.

The Beginning

Chapter One: The Hunger Problem

Simba's parents were dead.

Four words. That was all it took to sum up a lifetime worth of agony and depression. That was all it took to render him an orphan. That was all it took to make him feel like taking his claws to his own throat and killing himself.

But he wouldn't. He was too scared to do even that.

Simba sighed heavily, looking out over the edge of the cliff. He was stuck in the jungle. Not only were his parents dead, but so was his home. The Pride Lands. Taken in a matter of minutes by two psychopathic creatures known as the Vimelea. His home—his future kingdom—had burnt to ashes, leaving nothing more than an enormous hole in the ground.

It felt like most of his life had been ripped away. What was he going to do now that everything was gone? His hopes, his ambitions, were dead and buried. He had nothing to aspire to. He was nothing more than a shell of his former self.

"Simba?"

Well, at least he still had Nala. That was something. If there was one ray of sunshine in the darkness, then it was her. She was the only thing stopping him from doing something stupid and killing himself just to end the pain. Sometimes he forgot how much he loved her... It was quite a strong emotion for a cub like him.

But he didn't answer her call. He just stared glumly across the crevice below the cliff, where thousands upon thousands of huge trees resided. Far too tired to respond. He didn't even feel like speaking anymore.

"Simba?" Nala traipsed over to him. "Are you okay?"

He grunted something in response. To Nala, that translated to "No. I'm not okay. I'm miserable." She couldn't exactly blame him. She understood how it felt to lose a parent—or, to be more specific, discover that he was a maniacal wizard who wanted to kill his own daughter. It was an odd life to live, she had to be honest.

Simba rested his back against the trunk of a tree, closing his eyes. He just wanted to fall asleep and never wake up. He couldn't do anything now. His life was useless. Utterly pointless.

"Simba, please," Nala urged, tapping him on the side. "You've barely spoken in days. I know this hard for you, but it's difficult for us, too. We need to stick together if we stand any chance of surviving out here."

Simba rolled over to look at her, pure misery filling his eyes. "We won't survive," he said, before letting out a dry chuckle. "We're all gonna die."

Nala frowned. "We're *not* going to die," she said through gritted teeth. "We just need you to help us. You're the leader—you've *always* been the leader. That's the way it works. Just help us. What are we supposed to do?"

Simba frowned. "I don't know," he replied honestly. "There's nothing we can do. My parents are gone, our home is gone; we don't have anything to go back to. We're just... *lost*."

"We can rebuild," Nala suggested. "Start a new kingdom, somewhere else. Anything is possible, Simba. You know it."

"We're just cubs," Simba reminded her. "We can't rule a kingdom."

"Feels like we *shouldn't* be," Nala grumbled, sitting beside him. "Sometimes it feels like we've been cubs for years, doesn't it?"

"Where's Haiba?" Simba suddenly asked, looking around.

"Hunting," Nala said. "I don't know what, though. Seems like all he can find is fruit and bugs around here. My mom's looking after home with Zazu."

Their 'home' now was nothing more than a small clearing in the midst of the jungle. It left barely enough room for the five of them to sleep in: Simba, Nala, Haiba, Sarafina and Zazu. Of course, Zazu had the luxury of being able to sleep in a tree, but it was still cramped for the remaining four of them.

"It's not much of a home," Simba complained. "We should find somewhere bigger."

"You know Tama and Tojo said that we could share theirs," Nala said.

"No," Simba said bluntly. "I'm not dragging them into this. They've already suffered enough of our problems. We can fix this by ourselves."

"Well, we won't be able to if you don't help," Nala told him. "Come on, Simba. What would your parents think if they saw you moping around like this?"

"My parents are dead," Simba said. "They can't think anything. They don't *have* anything. Just darkness."

"They weren't bad," Nala insisted.

"No," agreed Simba. "The Vimelea *made* them bad. And now they have to suffer for it."

Nala sighed, knowing that it was going to take a lot of work just to make Simba the *least* bit of his former self. Right now, he was just a depressed wreck. What would it take to make him happy again?

But she didn't know. She didn't think she ever would.

"Okay, so I managed six berries and a worm," Haiba said as he strode into the clearing. "But then I dropped them off a cliff, so we have nothing for this evening."

"If there were any antelope around here, then I'd be able to hunt," Sarafina said glumly, as she lay on her side. "But there's nothing. This jungle is all dried up for lionesses like me."

"I can see why my mother always detested jungle life," Zazu grumbled, perched on the branch of a nearby tree. "Too many predators. Like snakes." He shuddered in fear.

"Have you seen Nala?" Sarafina asked.

"No sign of her," Haiba replied. "And I haven't seen Simba since this morning. This is a big place—they could be anywhere."

"I hope nothing's happened to them," Sarafina said. "We've lost enough already." She, too, was quite saddened at the loss of the Pride Lands. Not to mention the King and Queen, too. They were her friends—and now they were gone for ever. It was quite heartbreaking, to say the least.

"This is miserable," Haiba sighed. His eyes lit up when he saw Simba and Nala stride back into the clearing. "Oh, there you are. Where'd you disappear to?"

"Just went for a walk," Nala told him. "Did you get anything for a dinner?"

"I *did*," Haiba said, "but I lost it. And besides, it wasn't much, anyway."

"If we don't get a proper meal soon, then we're doomed," Nala said. "I don't know what to do."

"We could make it to the Grand Lands," Haiba suggested. "It might take a night or two, but it's not *that* far away."

Nala shook her head. "No—we'll starve to death before we get there. We've barely eaten in three days already."

It was true. The situation was dire now. Within a few days, they'd be nothing more than skin and bones. All of them dead—just like the Pride Lands and Simba's parents. Then the kingdom would be truly gone.

"I have an idea," Haiba said, raising a paw in the air.

"If it's 'let's all kiss', then I'm not interested," Nala said. "The last thing I want to think about before dying is your greasy

mouth on mine."

"Who says my mouth is greasy?" said Haiba, offended. "I keep very good care of myself. I am a prince, after all."

"Yeah—the *clown* prince," Nala remarked. "Anyway, what's your idea?"

"Well, you remember Jowai Resort?" Haiba asked.

"Jowai Resort?" Sarafina's interest was piqued. "I've always wanted to go there. It was always too expensive, though—they charge you five wildebeests for membership."

"Hmm," agreed Zazu. "If there was ever a quaint place to retire, then that would be it."

"What about Jowai Resort, Haiba?" Nala asked.

"You're forgetting," Haiba said. "I'm a registered member."

"Yeah," Nala said, "but *we're* not. They almost threw us into a volcano last time, remember?"

"*What?*" Sarafina exclaimed in shock.

"It's a long story," Nala said briefly.

"Look, it's simple," Haiba said. "We can break into Jowai Resort and steal all of the food we'll ever need. They have an unlimited supply of it just waiting to be eaten."

"Oh, yeah?" challenged Nala. "And how are we supposed to break in?"

"A simple distraction," Haiba said. "I'll go in as Don Haiba. Then I can swoon the lionesses with my charm while you sneak in behind and steal the food supply. It's easy."

"I don't know," Nala said. "It sounds risky. What do you think, Simba?"

Simba didn't answer. He just sat on the ground, staring straight ahead. Drowning in his own misery.

"Simba? *Simba?*" she yelled at the top of her voice.

"What?" he finally grumbled, in no mood to speak.

"What do you think of the plan?" Nala asked.

"Yeah, it's great. Whatever," Simba mumbled.

Nala rolled her eyes, turning back to Haiba. "Fine. We'll break into Jowai Resort and steal the food. But if you ask me, then it's just an excuse for you to smooch with some lionesses."

"No way, Nala," Haiba said, a nervous smile on his face. "Why would you ever think that?"

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: The Great Food Robbery

Chapter Two: The Great Food Robbery

Jowai Resort was always a peaceful area of the jungle, manned by many beautiful—and somewhat psychotic—lionesses. Of course, only the wealthiest lions ever got to stay there. It cost a lot of food to run the place. On the bright side, though, it usually ended up becoming the food you would eat the following evening.

The outskirts of the great resort were comprised of nothing more than several lush, tall green trees. A perfect hiding place for any intruders. And it was behind these trees that five heads poked around, eyeing the resort's entrance with curiosity.

"Okay, here's how we're going to do this," Haiba said, narrowing his eyes as he spotted two lionesses guarding the entrance. "I'm going to pose as Don Haiba and distract them, so you can sneak in around the back where they keep the food. Once you've grabbed what you can, we'll run out of there faster than you say, 'Haiba, will you marry me?'"

"None of us will be saying that, then," Nala remarked flatly.

"Remember to grab as much food as possible," Haiba reminded them. "Once they notice their food store has gone missing, they'll tighten up security."

"They won't be able to find us, will they?" Sarafina asked worriedly. "I dread to think how they'd punish us..."

"As long as it doesn't involve a volcano, then I'm happy," Nala responded.

"There are worse deaths," Zazu said worriedly. "Death by monkeys, for example. I never did get over that Royal Challenge punishment..."

"Okay," Haiba said. "You wait here, while I go and distract them." He stepped out carefully from the tree, before striding towards the two lionesses guarding the resort's entrance. "*Yo, girls!* What's up?"

"Don Haiba!" one of the lionesses exclaimed, grinning at the sight of him. "You're back! My, you've lost a lot of weight!"

"*Yo!*" Haiba exclaimed in response. "Well, I've gotta look my best for the nice girls, right? I mean, look at this one—this one's a ten!" he exclaimed, pointing at the other lioness.

"Ten?" said the lioness, confused.

"Yeah—you know, ten out of ten," Haiba said. "Perfect, *yo!*"

"That's very kind of you," said the lioness, blushing.

"He's so yummy," said the other.

"He's really good at that act, isn't he?" Nala said. "Half the time, I think he *enjoys* being repulsive."

"He *is* repulsive," said Zazu. "I've never seen such an aggressively romantic cub."

"They're not looking our way," Sarafina said, monitoring the two lionesses. "I think we can make our move for the food supply."

"Right," Nala said. "Let's move!"

Haiba continued to try and win over the two lionesses. "I mean, what I'm saying about you two is *yo!* Not just *yo*, but I mean, *yo!* Get what I'm saying?"

The two lionesses narrowed their eyes at each other, bemused. "We don't, actually," one of them said.

"Come on—I'm Don Haiba!" he exclaimed, grinning widely. "Everyone knows what I mean. It doesn't matter, though, 'cause you two are beautiful. I've been shot in the butt with a dart, and now I'm in love."

"Aww..." the two lionesses said, staring at him with admiration.

Simba, Nala, Zazu and Sarafina darted behind the tall trees surrounding the perimeter of Jowai Resort, careful not to attract any undue attention.

"Looks like he's doing well so far," Sarafina noted. "There's no one guarding the side of the resort. She stared longingly at the beauty of Jowai Resort. "I wish we could stay here... It really is beautiful."

"I don't believe we have much time to admire the surroundings," Zazu told her sternly. "We need to steal the food." An ashamed look crossed his face. "Oh, my. The former majordomo—stealing food. Is there *any* low I won't stoop to?"

"There's not much else we can do," Nala said. "We *have* to steal if we want to survive. It's a lion-eat-lion world out here."

"Come on," Sarafina urged, nudging them forward. "We don't have much time."

The four animals continued to move along the trees, eventually ending up around the back of the resort.

"Wow..." Nala gaped.

Stood in front of them had to be the most enormous supply of food they had ever laid eyes on. Scraps of zebra, wildebeest and antelope were spread out across an enormous section of the resort, blocked off by several thick bushes. The sunlight shone down on the massive supply, making it seem almost heavily.

"I think that should satisfy our hungers," Zazu said, summing it up perfectly.

"Grab what you can, and don't let anyone see you," Nala said, before hopping over one of the bushes and making for a pile of zebra meat. She gathered up as many pieces as she could in her mouth. Simba, Sarafina and Zazu did the same.

"Mmm—mmf—mmm," Nala said. Sadly, the copious amount of food stored within their mouths made it quite difficult for them to speak.

"Whaf?" Sarafina said.

"Mmm—mmm—mmf!" She jerked her head in the general direction of the Jowai Resort entrance. The message was simple: *Let's get out of here.*

They all got the point, running—or, in Zazu's case, flying—back towards where Haiba was.

Back at the entrance to the resort, Haiba was still distracting the two lionesses. Needless to say, he was succeeding pretty easily.

"What I'm saying is that I could marry you tomorrow," Haiba told the two. "No, today! *Yo!* That sounds right! Let's party all night and get it on, yknow what I'm saying, *yo?*"

The two lionesses purred at him. Haiba nodded and smiled in response. He had them right where he wanted. Maybe there might even be time for a quick kissing session before the others returned...

"*Yo!* This is the life!" Haiba exclaimed. He then spotted Simba, Nala, Zazu and Sarafina stood behind a tree in front of him. "*Yo, guys! What's up?*"

They all gaped at him, stunned that he had broken their cover so easily.

The lionesses guarding the resort saw them making off with almost half of their food supply, and anger instantly descending upon their faces. They growled with fury.

Haiba frowned, realising his mistake. "Oh, *yo.*"

The lionesses bared their teeth at Haiba, before pouncing at him. He leapt to his paws, running for Simba and the others. "Go, go, go!"

They all followed suite, sprinting as fast as they could away from the scene, leaving Jowai Resort and the furious lionesses behind.

"Well, aside from the ending, I'd say that was a pretty successful operation," Haiba said cheerily as they ran.

"Mmm—mmf—mmm," Nala said, still unable to speak properly with the food in her mouth.

"I know," Haiba said, smiling. "*Mmm*—tasty, isn't it?"

Back at the entrance to Jowai Resort, the two lionesses watched them disappear into the distance. They stared at each other, their eyes turning red with anger. They bared their sharp teeth, revealing them to be three times longer than that of any normal lioness.

But these lionesses were *far* from normal.

AN: Dun dun dun! Bet you didn't expect *that*, did you? Looks like these lionesses are up to no good, and they don't like Simba and the others making off with their food supply. Still, it was fun to have another bit of Don Haiba madness from everyone's favourite cub. The series is getting off to an exciting start, huh? Hopefully you'll review, and I'll see you soon with the next two chapters.

And for those of you tropers out there, I have a TV Tropes page now! *The Lion King Adventures*. I knew that name would pay off some day. Go on —add more and more tropes until it turns out I've stolen from everyone else. It'll end my fan fiction career.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Dinnertime

AN: Well, all of you seem very pleased at my return. That's good to hear. I mean, it'd be terrible if I posted a new story and you all suddenly started to hate me. I'm very eager to introduce a new breed of villain in these next two chapters, too. Should be exciting. After all, I live for my kooky villains, don't I?

kora22: Haiba will always end up making a fool of himself. Needless to say, he's not exactly as smart as Simba or Nala. Still, we love him all the same.

Haradion: Don Haiba is always hilarious. I don't think we ever will meet the *real* one, though. That could only end in disturbing tragedy...

the-mysterious-other: I suppose it is very bittersweet. But I'm sure our intrepid new team of animals will be able to bond together over the course of this climactic series.

anonymous13: What can I say? I love my TV Tropes page, too. It's the ultimate form of reward, in my opinion. So, you want to know about my glorious acting career, do you? Well, if you want to see me, then you're out of luck, I'm afraid. Sadly, there seems to be something of a cruel joke in which only part of my body is ever visible in everything that I'm in. I once was a background extra in a British TV series called *Casualty*, where you can only see the back of my head. There was also a commercial for some milkshake drink where you can only see my legs bouncing up and down. I've never seen myself on camera, actually; I always end up missing the shows that I'm in. Too busy writing this series, you understand. That and the fact that most of what I'm in sucks. And yes—in those days, I didn't get paid very well. It was a tough life.

Chapter Three: Dinnertime

"Well," Haiba said, his mouth full as he finished off the last of his dinner, "this meat sure is tasty." They were sat in a circle in the cramped conditions of their new 'home', savouring their spoils from Jowai Resort.

"You're telling me," Nala said, satisfied with the meal. "Those lionesses sure know how to serve it up."

"It's Jowai Resort," Haiba said. "Only the best food ever gets stored there. Otherwise they'd go out of business. Good thing I thought of stealing from them."

"You almost got us killed," Nala reminded him.

"It could have been worse," Haiba said.

"It could have been *better*," Nala retorted. "We're outcasts, now, remember? No more Pride Lands means no more respect. We could be eaten by anything out here. The jungle isn't the right place for a lion to live. It's dangerous."

"I don't know," Simba said, speaking for the first time ages. "I could probably live out on my own for a few years—with a little help."

"Who? That meerkat and the warthog who almost sucked out our souls?" Nala asked sarcastically. "I'm sure they would have been a *great* help to us. *Hakuna matata* indeed." She then frowned. "Wait a minute—you're speaking."

"Yeah, so?" Simba mumbled, slumping against a bush. "I need to speak. It's... healthy."

"It is if you want to keep your mind," Nala responded. "If we had no one to talk to, then we'd just go insane."

"Am I the only one with the pressing question on my mind?" Zazu inquired, raising a wing as if asking for permission to speak. "What if those, um, healthily psychotic lionesses track us down?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Zazu," Nala said, waving such an idea off. "Those lionesses can't track us down. They barely even saw us."

"Hmm." A frown crossed Haiba's face. "They know who I am. They know that I'm not Don Haiba anymore. What if they see me? They might... Well, I don't know *what* they'll do, but I guarantee it won't involve kissing."

"Why are we worrying all of a sudden?" Nala asked wonderingly. She pointed an accusing claw at Haiba. "You're the one who said it could have gone worse."

Haiba smiled innocently. "You're the one who said it could have gone better."

Nala didn't react. "This is just stupid," she said. "All you have to do is look around. No one's watching us. Those lionesses will just go back to their fancy resort and enjoy the rest of their lives. We have nothing to worry about."

The two lionesses who guarded the entrance to Jowai Resort were hot on the trail of their mysterious thieves. Having incredibly good eyesight—an attribute that showed them not to be lionesses at all—they were easily able to see across great distances. In fact, they could see so far that Simba and his friends seemed like only a stone's throw away.

Although identical, the lionesses had separate names. One of them was named Maumivu, and she was the first to speak. "The intruders have violated our resort." She spoke calmly, but it was clear that on the inside there was a raging volcano of anger ready to erupt.

The other was named Hofu. "And what shall we do about them?" She spoke in an identical voice—as though they were twins.

Maumivu looked at her sister. "We shall devour them."

They grinned at each other, revealing their vastly abnormal teeth, laughing in a deep growl.

The thieves would soon be dead—and revenge would be theirs.

"Well, I think that we should make this place more homely," Haiba decided, hopping to his paws. "First of all, it's far too crowded in here. We should cut down all these bushes and twigs keeping us packed in."

"Or we could move," Sarafina suggested. "Just throwing that out there."

"Actually, I think some homely decoration might be more appropriate," Zazu interjected, looking suddenly nervous. "After all, we've only just moved in."

"You just don't want to be eaten by predators," Sarafina accused.

"Don't be so ridiculous," Zazu said, feigning offence. "I can fly at such an altitude that *no* predator would never be able to capture me."

"Yeah—except for vultures," Sarafina retorted. "What about when they decide you're an easy target and rip both your wings off before devouring your carcass?"

"Am I the only one who's disturbed by what she's saying?" Haiba asked.

"It's just the way my mother works," Nala explained. "I think she's used to hunting and killing other animals by now. She's just sort of developed a taste for blood."

"Yeah—like when she was a vampire," Simba said. "That was just peachy."

"I almost made off with that Vitani chick, too," Haiba said. "Yep, she sure was beautiful. When she *wasn't* trying to suck my blood, I mean."

"Can we stop talking about blood and guts?" Nala asked. "It's spoiling my dinner."

"Your dinner was the product of blood and guts," Haiba retorted. "That's how we do things in the animal kingdom. We hunt, we eat—and it's tasty. What more could you want?"

Nala shook her head. "This isn't going anywhere," she sighed. "If this is what we have to put up with for the rest of our lives, then someone kill me."

"Yes, Nala—let's kill each other," Haiba said, "and then we can be together for ever." He flashed a toothy grin at her.

"Simba, couldn't you think of something to do that'll stop Prince Dumbo from talking?" Nala pleaded.

"How about a seriously crazy, psychotic, deadly adventure?" he suggested in a dull tone, not really interested in the conversation. All he could honestly think about was his parents, and how he was never going to see them ever again. It was only ever when something disappeared that you began to miss it.

"I *miss* the seriously crazy, psychotic, deadly adventures," Nala sighed. "It feels like this jungle has nothing to offer. It's like we've exhausted it."

"Oh, come on," Haiba said. "There are plenty of great things that the jungle has to offer. Like..." He looked around. "Grass! Isn't that exciting?"

"Haiba, why don't you go smash yourself over the head with a rock or something?" Nala suggested. "At least that'll be entertaining."

"Well, why can't *you* do it?" Haiba asked.

"Because you're stupider than I am," she replied.

Haiba narrowed his eyes in confusion. "I wish I understood that."

Nala wandered over to the tallest tree in the clearing, staring up to see how high it went. "I wonder if there's somewhere bigger nearby," she said. "Maybe if I crawled to the top of this tree then we could find out."

"Knock yourself out," Haiba said. "Not literally, I mean."

Nala rolled her eyes and began to scale the tree, one branch at a time. "Here goes nothing..." she grunted. If she was being honest, then she was only doing this to alleviate the boredom. It was true that the Pride Lands—now since reduced to a smouldering crater in the earth—made for a much more interesting home than the jungle. She was almost *begging* for another deadly escapade...

"Wait, wait, wait," Haiba said, waving his forepaws in the air. "Am I the only one who's just noticed something incredibly disturbing and potentially dangerous?"

"If you're using those big words, than you must be," Simba mumbled. "What are you talking about?"

"Sarafina and Zazu have disappeared."

"Huh?" Just as Nala exclaimed that, one of the branches she was holding on to snapped in half. She hurtled to the ground, landing hard on her back. "Ooff!"

"They've disappeared?" Simba leapt to his paws, looking around frantically for any sign of Sarafina or Zazu. He didn't want to lose any more friends... "Where did they go?"

"I don't know," Haiba said worriedly. "I don't think Nala knows anything much, either."

Nala was stumbled around in a daze. "Wow... everything is spinning..." she said dizzily, before smacking headfirst into a tree trunk and falling unconscious.

Whoosh!

The sudden sound caused both Simba and Haiba to huddle together, eyes darting around the clearing.

"What was that?" Simba asked, shaking slightly.

"Something," Haiba said, "or *someone*."

Simba and Haiba watched in horror as two figures leapt out from the bushes, snarling at the two cubs with their huge, sharp teeth. The last thing they saw before blacking out were two pairs of blood red eyes...

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: The Scavengers

Chapter Four: The Scavengers

Simba's eyes flickered open. His vision was blurry, and he felt very dizzy. All the blood seemed to be pouring right into his head. "Oh..." he moaned. "What happened?" He tried to move around, but soon realised that his hind paws had been secured together by thick vines which were dangling from a branch.

"Welcome." He noticed Haiba next to him, in very much the exact same situation. "Just hanging around, huh?"

"My head hurts," he groaned, putting a paw to his forehead. "What the heck happened to us?"

"I believe we were kidnapped by two incredibly attractive lionesses with very sharp teeth," Haiba explained. "Imaging kissing that mouth."

"Any sign of Zazu or Nala's mom?" Simba asked, looking around the maze of trees they were in. But there was no sign of anyone else.

"Nope," Haiba said. "No sign of Nala, either. They must have taken them somewhere else."

"But why would they just leave us?" Simba wondered. "I'm pretty sure they were those lionesses who were guarding Jowai Resort."

"Of course!" Haiba exclaimed, slapping his forehead in realisation. "I *knew* I recognised them from somewhere before! You don't forget faces like those—even if they *do* have abnormally sharp teeth."

"But they didn't look like that before," Simba grunted, using his free claws to sever the thick vines. He dropped to the ground, landing roughly on his side. "Ow." He climbed to his paws, striding over to Haiba. "Wait a sec—I'll cut you free."

Simba sliced the vines in half, catching Haiba in his paws as he fell. Haiba grinned at him. "You have very beautiful eyes, Simba."

"Shut up." He dropped Haiba to the ground, before striding off into the mass of trees. "Now, we need to find Nala and the others before these things kill them—or worse."

"I dread to think what 'or worse' means," Haiba said. "You can kill someone just by kissing them these days."

"I know," Simba said, remembering his encounter with an incredibly affectionate creature known as Maji. She wanted to completely suck out the water in his body—through kissing. It wasn't something he liked to think about often... "I just don't get why these things would come after us like that."

"Isn't it obvious?" Haiba said. "We stole their food, and now they're very angry. They want revenge. Blood. Death."

"Nah." Simba shook his head. "It's more than that. They could have just killed us straightaway. That would have been easier."

"But far less interesting," Haiba said. "You know the bad guys—they like to tease and trick and attack and... well, all sorts of other nasty things that I can't be bothered to mention."

"It has to be some kind of trap," Simba said. "They want us to find Nala and the others so they do... whatever it is they're planning."

"*Wrong, little cub,*" spoke two unpleasant-sounding female voices. They echoed throughout the forest, chilling Simba and Haiba to the bone.

"What was that?" Haiba whispered.

"*It was us!*"

The two cubs suddenly found themselves slammed up against a wide tree by the two Jowai Resort lionesses.

"You tried to escape," said Maumivu. She seemed pleasantly amused by the idea.

Hofu giggled. "How cute."

"Uh... yo, girls," Haiba said. "Up for some action?"

Hofu hissed loudly at Haiba, baring her huge teeth at him. He recoiled in disgust, wincing from the two monsters. "Wow, you have bad breath," he grunted. "It smells like... *guts*."

"I think it *is*, Haiba," Simba told him. He turned his attention to Maumivu. "Who are you and what have you done with our friends?"

"Oh, don't worry about them," said Maumivu. "They're safe."

"For now," added Hofu with a giggle.

"And as for who *we* are," said Maumivu, poking a claw into Simba's chest. "We are the Scavengers."

"The... the Scavengers?" Simba said, confused. He'd never heard of such creatures before—and he'd met monsters like the Vimelea and Death. "What are they?"

"We are not a *what*," said Maumivu. "We are forms of life just like you, scrawny."

"*Scrawny*?" Simba exclaimed, thrashing about to try and escape. "I'll show you scrawny in a minute!"

The two Scavengers glanced at each other and laughed. "Our strength is no match for the likes of you," said Maumivu. "You cannot stop us."

"Yes," agreed Hofu. "We get what we want. *Always*."

"So what *do* you want?" Haiba inquired. "I can offer my romantic services, if you're in that sort of mood."

"Shut up, little filth," Hofu spat, tightening her grip on Haiba's throat. "You will speak when spoken to."

"Ooh—domineering," Haiba grinned. "I like it."

Hofu looked to her sister. "Can we kill him already?"

"Wait," Maumivu instructed. Simba deduced that she was the leader of the two. "We haven't explained to them who we are yet."

"So tell us," Simba ordered.

Maumivu smiled at him with her row of huge teeth. "The Scavengers are like any normal lionesses," she explained. "We were just... born differently."

"You were born *psychos*!" Haiba exclaimed.

Hofu roared at the top of her voice, digging her jagged claws into Haiba's throat. "Your personal hygiene is something to be desired," he choked. "Those are really dirty claws..."

"So you're not from somewhere far away?" Simba questioned. They weren't like the Vimelea—who came far from earth just for the purpose of destruction.

"We are from these lands," Maumivu explained. "It's just that lionesses like me and my sister require certain... needs."

"And these needs are... what, exactly?" Simba asked.

"We don't get these beautiful teeth just for free," Maumivu said, her eyes glowing a deadly red. "They come with the problem of... the hunger."

"The hunger," said Hofu, as though she worshipped it.

"The hunger?" Haiba said.

"What's the hunger?" said Simba.

"We have to eat," Maumivu explained. "Eat so much—every single day. The hunger. It never ends. Never stops. Never ceases. We have to eat. Eat, eat, eat. All day."

"I can see why you moved to Jowai Resort," Haiba said. "And why you're so angry at us for stealing all that food."

"We are not interested in that pitiful supply of food," Maumivu said, much to the cubs' surprise. "We require meat that is..."

fresh."

"And of our own blood," added Hofu.

"Yes." Maumivu nodded, an unpleasant smile on her face. "We need lions. Lionesses. Those just like us. We need to devour them in order to fulfil the hunger. Every day. So many lives that need to be consumed so that we can survive."

"This is sick," Haiba said. "No wonder your breath smells so bad. But once you eat me, I'm sure it'll be much better." He smiled at the two psychopaths.

"You're cannibals," Simba said, goggling at the Scavengers with wide eyes. "You eat other lions."

"Yes," they said in unison. "We must eat."

"We particularly like the cubs," said Hofu, almost drooling at the sight of Haiba. Annoying as he may be, he still looked absolutely succulent. "So much energy and bounciness. Strong nerves. Lovely to taste..." She leant in towards Haiba's face and licked his cheek slowly, savouring the taste.

"I think that's the first show of affection I've found disgusting," Haiba said, wincing from Hofu's actions.

"So... what are you going to do to us?" Simba asked, gulping with fear. He already knew what the answer would be.

Maumivu and Hofu looked at each other and grinned.

"I think it's time for dinner," they both said, opening their jaws wide and preparing for a tasty meal.

Simba and Haiba stared at each other with fear in their eyes, realising that their fates were sealed...

AN: I quite like the Scavengers. Very disgusting, yet entertaining bad guys. Plus I love cannibalism. Not in the literal sense, of course, but you get what I mean. I think I'll go now before you start to think of me as some sort of depraved psycho... Don't forget to review, though!

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: The Trap Is Set

AN: I'm doing pretty good with this story. I'm actually surprised; I thought it might take weeks for me to finish. But this has been going rather smoothly. I mean, that's what you all want, isn't it? Quicker updates? Of course you do.

Haradion: I'll try not to ruin your health. Mine is probably already ruined; these days, I don't go to sleep until about one in the morning. I'm surprised I can stay awake in the afternoons.

kora22: Is there a lot of cannibalism in horror movies these days? Not being a horror fan, I haven't noticed. I sort of lost all interest after every horror movie became nothing more than a gore fest. What's the latest these days, *Saw 12*? They don't know how to scare people properly anymore.

Greg M 94: I am surprised by how good I'm updating this week. Actually, my half-term was last week. I'm not English, either; I live in that tiny country next to England that nobody cares about called Wales. You know—the place with those people who still look at the moon and don't know what it is.

Chapter Five: The Trap Is Set

"Why does woe always seem to follow us?" Zazu complained. "Every day is filled with nothing but misery. It makes me sick."

Upon regaining consciousness, Nala, Zazu and Sarafina had awoken to find themselves stuck in the cramped conditions of a deep cave. The only way out seemed to be through the endless darkness...

"Oh, stop your yapping," Sarafina said. "There has to be a way out somehow. Otherwise whoever took us wouldn't be able to get in."

"That's beside the point," Zazu said, slumping to the ground in sadness. "It's still utterly despairing..."

"My mother's right, Zazu," said Nala. "There has to be a way out. But all I can see is... darkness."

"Yes—that's what our lives have been reduced to," Zazu said, a frown on his beak. "Darkness."

Nala rolled her eyes and strolled off into the blackness, feeling around for any sign of an exit. But there was no light at the end of the tunnel. Just more and more emptiness. It was quite depressing. "This cave must be really deep."

"What were those things?" Sarafina asked. She couldn't ever recall seeing such horrible creatures as these lionesses. Those sharp teeth and red eyes were enough to make her shiver...

"I don't know," Nala replied. "I've never seen anything like them before."

"We're doomed, doomed, doomed..." Zazu moaned, his voice echoing off into the distance. Ever since the death of Pori, he hadn't exactly been in the brightest of moods. He was much like Simba—lost without a cause now that someone he loved had died.

"Can it, Zazu," Nala snapped. "We need to stick together and think if we're going to make it out of here alive."

"I don't understand," Sarafina said, circling around, barely able to see in the cave. "Why would they put us here? Why didn't they just kill us straightaway?"

"I don't know," Nala replied, stepping even further into the darkness. "Maybe it's—"

Crunch!

She stopped dead as something was crushed underneath her paw.

"What was that?" Sarafina asked. "What did you step on?"

Nala turned back to her mother, holding up half of a lion's bone. "We're food."

Simba thought fast as the Scavengers got ready to devour him and Haiba. He bit down hard on Maumiwu's paw. She hissed at him, recoiling in anger as he dropped to the ground. "Why, you little..."

Hofu turned to look at her sister, allowing Haiba to bite her on the paw as well. "Let's get out of here!" he cried, breaking into a run.

"No arguments from me," replied Simba, sprinting alongside him. "We need to find somewhere to hide. Those things are fast." He looked over his shoulder to see the two Scavengers chasing after them. They were much faster than the average lioness, meaning that it wouldn't be long before they caught up.

"But it's all just trees," Haiba said, looking around in despair. "Why does everything have to be the same in this jungle?"

"Trees..." Simba's expression changed to one of realisation. "That's it."

"That's what?" Haiba asked, confused.

"Follow me." Simba darted to the left, ducking behind a tree. Haiba followed his lead. "We need to knock down this tree."

"*What?*" Haiba exclaimed. "Simba, are you crazy?"

"The trunk is weak," Simba observed, looking the tree over. "It just needs a good push."

"But, Simba—"

"Just *do* it," Simba interrupted, pushing against the tree's trunk with all his might. Haiba soon joined him. The two struggled and strained as the tree slowly began to tip forward. "Just... a little... further..."

Just as the two Scavengers spotted them, the tree finally gave way, falling right on top of the two and seemingly crushing them.

Simba breathed a sigh of relief, collapsing onto his back in exhaustion. "I think we did it," he gasped. "I think we killed them."

"Then let's get out of here," Haiba said, stumbling to his paws. "We have to find the others—if they haven't been eaten already."

"They said they'd be safe," Simba said. "They're still alive."

"At least we don't have to deal with those creepy cannibals anymore," Haiba said optimistically. "For a second there, I thought they were going to swallow us whole. Still, they're dead now... Nothing to worry about."

The Scavenger shoved aside the massive tree with their incredible strength. Thanks to their abilities, they were completely unharmed by the impact. Although it had proved to be a lucky distraction for Simba and Haiba.

"Those little brats," spat Maumivu, eyes glowing red with fury. "Why is it the tasty ones always have to be so tricky?"

"We cannot let them get away," said Hofu. "This could be the meal of the century. Just think of how delectable those springy legs will taste..." She seemed to be almost drooling at the thought of devouring them...

"Forget about them for now," said Maumivu. "Let's check on our other prisoners. I'm sure they're much less... resisting."

"*Food?*" Zazu leapt to his feet, shaking with fear. "Why on earth would two lionesses like them want to eat us? I'm not even tasty—just feathers and bones..."

Nala frowned, trying to come up with a way for them to escape this deadly situation. "I hope they haven't eaten Simba and Haiba."

"I hope they don't eat *us*!" Zazu cried, lost in his panic.

"There's no way out," Sarafina concluded, having examined the whole area. "We're trapped."

"Great," Nala mumbled. "So now all we can do is wait to be swallowed."

Suddenly, a circle of light shone down into the cave. The three looked up to see a lioness with glowing red eyes move a large stone aside. Clearly this was how they had managed to shove them inside the cave.

"Consider your wait over," said Maumivu. She lashed out with one of her paws, reaching inside the cave and grabbing

Zazu. He let out a shriek of terror.

"No!" he cried, as Maumivu dragged him away. "Don't eat me! Eat them instead!"

Nala and Sarafina watched in horror as his voice vanished off into the distance. "He's not going to live for much longer, is he?" Sarafina asked.

"We've gotta save him," Nala said, jumping upwards and hauling herself out of the cave. She examined her surroundings, and was surprised at where they had ended up. "Oh, no..."

"What is it?" Sarafina asked, as she climbed out of the cave. "What? How did we end up all the way out here?"

They were stuck right in the middle of a dry, featureless desert. Maumivu had already disappeared. She was a fast one, that lioness...

"I haven't been here in a while," Nala said. "I don't even know how far it is back to the jungle."

"Do you think that's where we she went?" asked Sarafina, looking around. She shielded her face with a paw from the glaring sun. It was much hotter due to the total absence of any shade nearby.

"It must be," Nala said. "Only someone crazy would ever want to live out here."

"This is a violation of my rights!" Zazu proclaimed as Maumivu carried him off. "I'll have you know that I once worked for the great King Mufasa! Granted, this was before he became a ravenous harbinger of death, but—"

"Keep that beak of yours shut," Maumivu snapped. "And you just might live through this. I don't like to eat birds. Far too crunchy. Plus all those feathers get in the way."

"Then what on earth do you need me for, then?" Zazu asked.

"A trap," Maumivu said. "It's obvious that your tasty friends will try and come to your rescue. It's all a matter of drawing them out so we can begin our feast. You're nothing more than bait."

"Oh, well, that's quite all right, then," Zazu said.

"Although," said Maumivu, a thoughtful look crossing her face, "I do hear that hornbill eyeballs are quite juicy..."

Zazu gulped nervously.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: The Growing Hunger

Chapter Six: The Growing Hunger

"Nala? Sarafina? Zazu? Anyone?" Haiba called, as he and Simba strode aimlessly through the jungle. It was a big place—almost infinite, in fact—so they could be anywhere. Days could pass before they found them...

"This is hopeless," Simba groaned, sitting on a large rock. "They might not even be in the jungle at all. The Scavengers could have taken them to a completely different pride."

"There's no way they would have been able to make it to another pride," Haiba told him. "It's just too far."

"They must have gone *somewhere*," Simba said. "I mean, if you were an insane, attractive lioness, where would you hide your victims?"

"Hmm..." Haiba thought for a moment.

Then it both hit them.

"Jowai Resort!"

"Jowai Resort!" Zazu exclaimed, as Maumivu arrived at the entrance. "Why on earth would you set your hideously evil trap *here*? It's densely populated!"

"My sister has taken care of *that* little problem," Maumivu replied with an evil smile.

Hofu suddenly emerged from inside the resort, licking the tips of her claws. They were covered in blood. "Mmm... I always knew that those lionesses would taste delicious," she said to her sister. "You should have stuck around for a lick."

"The resort is clear?" asked Maumivu. "That was fast."

"What can I say?" Hofu let out a burp. "I was hungry."

Zazu shuddered in terror. His idea of dying didn't involve painful digestion via two psychotic lionesses. He would have much preferred to go in a more peaceful...

"I've got the bird," Maumivu said. "It won't be long before those delicious-looking cubs decide to come and rescue him."

"Excuse me—that 'bird' has a name," Zazu interjected.

"Shut your beak or I'll eat it," Maumivu snapped.

"I'll be quiet," Zazu said, deciding that it would be best not to speak for the remainder of this horrid endeavour.

"Simba!" Nala was relieved to spot him and Haiba walking through the jungle. "You're safe! I thought those nasty lionesses were going to eat you!"

"Well, they didn't," Haiba said. "We sure showed them a thing or two, huh, Simba?"

"Yeah—whatever," Simba said. "We crushed them to death with a tree."

"Wait," Nala said, frowning. "You crushed them with a tree?"

"Yeah." Simba nodded.

"When?" Nala asked.

"I don't know—a few hours ago," Simba shrugged. "Why? They're dead. It's not really a problem anymore."

"Actually, that's where you're wrong," Sarafina said. "We saw one of those lionesses less than an hour ago—and she made off with Zazu."

"She 'made off' with Zazu?" Haiba said. "That's interesting. I didn't think Zazu was into interspecies relationships."

"I don't mean it like *that*," Sarafina frowned. "She took him."

"She took Zazu?" Simba said. "Oh, no. Hmm... looks like we have to rescue him, then."

"Another daring rescue attempt?" Haiba said. "Oh, can't we just leave him to be eaten? That's one less mouth to feed. Or, beak, if you want to be more specific."

"Haiba, we're not leaving Zazu to die," Nala said. "If the lionesses kidnapped *us*, then he would have come to our rescue."

"Hmm..." Haiba didn't look convinced. "Somehow, I doubt that. I think Zazu would have weaselled away from the situation entirely. That's more like him."

"Haiba, we're rescuing him, and that's that," Nala decided.

"I bet they're at Jowai Resort," said Simba, striding past them all. "There isn't any safer place for them to be. This is probably all a trap to lure us out."

"What makes you say that?" Nala asked.

"Those lionesses cornered me and Haiba earlier. They told us all about them," Simba explained. "They're called Scavengers. They like to eat other lions. They're cannibals. Think about it. Why would they eat Zazu? He wouldn't taste anywhere near as good—to them, at least."

"So they expect us to rescue Zazu," Nala concluded, "so that they can eat us?"

"That's the idea," Simba nodded. "Their hunger never ends. It just keeps going. They need to eat practically all day."

"I dread to think what they would have done to the lionesses working there, then," Sarafina said with a worried expression. "Especially if they're *really* hungry."

Jowai Resort was a beautiful place—though Zazu was too afraid to admire it. The blood spattered throughout the resort only managed to cement his fear. These lionesses—whoever they were—certainly weren't normal. In the space of half an hour, Zazu had watched them devour seven lioness corpses alone. It was barbaric. All they seemed to do was eat. Eat, eat, eat—then eat some more. To call it 'disgusting' was an understatement.

He was stood by the side of a river, watching as Maumivu and Hofu gulped down mouthful after mouthful of water to wash their gory meals down with.

"Don't you do anything other than eat?" He couldn't help but ask the question.

Maumivu looked up at him. "The hunger consumes us," she replied.

"The hunger?" said Zazu. "Whatever is that?"

"We must eat all the time," Hofu explained. "It never stops. We need more and more of our kind to survive. It's a curse."

"But we embrace it all the same," Maumivu added. "We just *love* the taste of lions—especially cubs. Why do we think we were so desperate to capture them in the first place?"

"So this has nothing to do with stealing the food supply," Zazu concluded. "The fact that you've eaten all of the resort's staff is proof enough of that."

"Exactly," said Maumivu. "Those cubs will keep us going for a whole day—maybe even *two*!"

"That's a whole new record!" grinned Hofu.

"This is repulsive," Zazu said, resisting the urge to throw up. He'd never seen such a horrid spectacle before. "How can you be so despicable to devour innocent cubs?" He just couldn't understand it.

The two Scavengers shrugged. "We just don't care," they both said, sounding very casual about the fact.

"That much is apparent," said Zazu.

"We have to kill them," Sarafina said.

"Huh?" the three cubs exclaimed, surprised at her suggestion.

"Well, it's the only option," she said. "It's kill or be killed out here in the jungle."

"Uh, yeah," Nala said. "How do you kill two lionesses who think of you as a tasty snack?"

"We could eat *them*," Haiba said. "That'd be a surprise, wouldn't it?"

"We're not eating them, Haiba," Nala said. "That'd make us just as bad."

"Like your mother said: 'kill or be killed', right?" he retorted.

"It's obvious that their weakness is their hunger," Simba said. "We just have to figure out a way to exploit it."

"Well, their hunger is huge," Nala said. "We could just... starve them."

"And how are we supposed to do that?" Haiba said. "Ask them nicely? 'Oh, please, Scavengers, will you stop eating for a week or so until you die?' Yeah—I'm sure that would go down a real treat, Nala."

"It's better than anything *you've* come up with," Nala shot back.

"At least I'm thinking realistically," Haiba responded.

"Realistically? *Ha!*" Nala exclaimed. "You practically *live* in an unreal world!"

"Hey, the fact that I was dropped on my head when I was a baby has nothing to do with my intelligence," Haiba said.

"We're all special in our own little way. You, for example, are special for being a complete and utter idiot."

"That's it!" Nala lunged at Haiba, baring her teeth and snarling at him. "*Just wait until I shove my claws down your throat!*" she roared.

"Don't you think we should stop them?" Sarafina asked as Nala and Haiba fought with each other.

Simba shrugged. "I don't know," he said. "It's sort of fun to watch."

"Look, stop! Stop!" Haiba rolled away from Nala. "Fighting isn't going to solve any of this! We need to work together!"

"That's what I said in the first place!" Nala yelled.

"Can't we all just calm down?" Sarafina asked. "This isn't exactly the right time to argue with each other."

"Well, maybe if we had a plan, then we wouldn't *have* to," Nala grumbled.

"We'll think of something on the way," Simba said, walking off in the direction of Jowai Resort. "Now, are you coming or not? We're not going to be able to fight them without your help."

"Fine," Nala said, getting to her paws. "As long as Haiba shuts up."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Haiba said, strolling past her. "I'll talk as much as I want, thank you very much. *Blah, blah, blah, blah...*"

"I'm gonna tear his head off if this keeps up," Nala said through gritted teeth as she followed Simba and the others.

From behind one of the trees, Maumivu smiled as she watched them walk away.

Right into their trap.

AN: It seems that the Scavengers have set a very deadly trap. If I'm feeling in that sort of mood, then I might be able to have the last chapter up within a next couple of days. Wouldn't that be brilliant? It'd be just like the good old days of Series One. Ah, Series One... Excuse me while I have a nostalgic moment...

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: The Main Course

AN: So, it seems that we have a full house for this story. I've been impeccably punctual all week. Without further ado, I gladly give you the final chapter of this 'tasty' story...

kora22: You have a fear of flying, huh? I haven't been on a plane myself in years, but that's because I just don't like to travel. Never really had much of an interest in it. And yes—I am Welsh. God help me.

Haradion: Yeah, the cubs do sort of have a penchant for causing utter death and destruction everywhere they go, don't they? It's almost like they're a recipe for disaster.

the-mysterious-other: I think we were all dropped on our heads as babies at some point. I mean, just look at these horrible stories I've written. If that doesn't make me stupid, then I'm... stupid.

Greg M 94: Whoa, whoa, whoa! Where's all this 'Simba and Nala breaking up' stuff coming from? I have no plans as of yet for such a thing. It's just that at the moment there's not much time for closeness after disaster struck the Pride Lands in the previous story. It's all quite miserable. Unless I say so, they're not broken up.

Chapter Seven: The Main Course

As Simba, Nala, Haiba and Sarafina arrived at Jowai Resort, they were unsurprised to discover that it was far too quiet. It seemed that everywhere they went these days seemed to have an aura of tense dread floating around the place...

"They're here," Nala said. "Somewhere."

"Waiting to jump out, I'd bet," Simba said, stepping forward. "They could be anywhere... hiding..."

"Oh, wow!" Haiba yelled in shock, jumping away from a nearby tree. "Look at that!"

"What?" Simba asked, rushing over to his side.

The tree in question was completely spattered with blood. In fact, *everything* seemed to be covered in some sort of horrible red substance. It was as though the entire resort had been massacred... eaten, even.

"They've eaten the whole resort," Nala said, disgusted. "Everyone here. It's all gone!"

"I hope that's not Zazu's blood," Simba said despairingly, staring at the tree.

"But they couldn't eat him—could they?" Nala asked. "You said they only eat lions and lionesses."

"Maybe they got *too* peckish," Haiba said, a worried expression on his face. "It's only a matter of time before they try to gulp us down."

"Let 'em try," said Nala feistily, ready for a fight. No cannibalistic lionesses were going to swallow her! "We can take them on."

"I wouldn't be so sure," replied Haiba. "They're incredibly strong. Simba and me were held up against a tree!"

"Which we then crushed them with," Simba added. "How they managed to survive that, I have no idea. They must be almost invincible."

"We're not invincible," said two female voices. "Just incredibly hungry. Our aspiration gives us strength."

Simba and the others looked on in fear as the two Scavengers emerged from the darkness, evil smiles on their faces.

"Welcome to dinner," Maumivu said, her stomach rumbling for the taste of cubs. She'd waited a long time for this... "Are you ready to surrender?"

"We will *never* surrender to you," Sarafina said bravely. "You give lionesses a bad name!"

"We couldn't care less about your opinions," Hofu said. "All that matters is fulfilling our ever-growing hunger."

"What have you done with Zazu?" Simba demanded. "If you've eaten him, too..."

"Why would we ever eat him? Birds taste horrible," Maumivu told them. "Everyone knows that."

"You still haven't answered my question," Simba snarled.

"I'm up here!" Zazu called. "If you think I'm going anywhere near *them*, then you're insane!"

"Huh?" Simba craned his neck to see Zazu cowering on the branch of a nearby tree. He looked like he'd been hiding up there for hours. "Well, at least you're safe."

"It would appear so," said Zazu, still shaking with fear. "Now, kill those lionesses before they kill *us*!"

"You could at least help," Simba said.

"I'm sorry, but 'fighting in battle' wasn't listed in my job description," Zazu replied. "You'll have to deal with it yourselves, I'm afraid."

"He really is quite cowardly," Sarafina said. "Someone needs to teach him how to fight properly!"

"Enough of this foolishness!" Maumivu yelled. "It's time for dinner, I think." She licked her muzzle, ready to devour her next meal. The hunger wasn't ever going to stop—and certainly not with the Jowai Resort lionesses. The cubs would be the real treat. They would be far more filling than any other lion or lioness...

"Uh..." Simba and the others took a nervous step backwards. "Any ideas, guys?"

"Run around screaming?" Haiba suggested. Needless to say, he wasn't exactly the greatest at coming up with ideas. After all, these lionesses were invincible. What was the use in thinking up a plan if it wasn't going to work? It was just useless to him.

"Come on, sis," Hofu said. "I'm just *begging* to taste their eyeballs..." Her eyes glowed red with anticipation. She'd never seen such energetic—and delicious—cubs in her entire life. She could sense so much energy and life in them. It would be so great to taste...

"Okay, I've gone from being afraid now," Nala said. "I'm on to 'intense panic'."

"Well, when all else fails, we revert to Plan A," Simba said.

"Which is?" Haiba asked.

"*Run!*"

Simba and the others scampered away, leaving the Scavengers incredibly unimpressed. "Oh, how pathetic," said Maumivu. "Of course—that's the easy way out, isn't it? Just *run*."

"We can catch them, can't we, though?" Hofu asked.

"Of course we can," Maumivu said. "As long as they don't—"

"Split up!" Simba commanded. "They can't catch all of us at once!"

Simba, Nala, Haiba and Sarafina sped off in different directions. The Scavengers growled with rage.

"I really need to learn to keep my mouth shut," Maumivu said, frowning.

"We should have just jumped for them," Hofu said. "Then we wouldn't have this problem of them always trying to escape! Why must cubs be so meddlesome?"

"Because they're cubs," Maumivu said. "It's how they work. All they do is annoy others."

"Let's just get them," said Hofu. "The hunger is growing stronger. If we don't eat, then we might just... *burst*."

The two Scavengers headed off in different directions. They were going to catch at least *one* of the cubs before the day was over...

Simba sprinted through the mass of trees, leaping over fallen branches and ducking through bushes. He didn't dare look back. The Scavengers were fast—they would be able to catch up with him in a matter of seconds. He needed to keep moving without getting distracted. He just hoped that Nala, Haiba and Sarafina would follow the same example as him...

"I'm coming for you, you little brat!" He could hear Maumivu yelling after him in the background. He could hear the pounding of her strong legs against the ground. She was so fast that he knew it wouldn't be long before she managed to get alongside him.

After almost a lifetime worth of adventures, Simba—although not muscly—was quite a fit cub. Running wasn't so much a problem; it was running *fast* that mattered in this situation. And his speed, in this case, just wasn't good enough to outrun creatures such as the Scavengers.

"*Aha!*" Maumivu cried, as she pounced on top of Simba, sending the two of them tumbling across the ground. When he came to his senses, he found that the hungry lioness was pinning him down with her immensely strong claws. "Time to be digested, cub!"

"Not today!" Simba stabbed her in the stomach with his claws. She cried out in pain, rolling away from him. He quickly broke into another run, only to be shunted up against a tree by the furious Scavenger.

"I've just about had enough of you," she snarled, raising a paw to slash his throat open. "But it'll all be over soon..."

Simba closed his eyes, awaiting his inevitable death. He'd failed. It was too late to do anything now. She was right—it was all over...

Thwack!

Simba's eyes snapped open upon hearing the sound. He saw Maumivu collapse onto her back, a dopey smile on her face. He spotted a small rock on the ground, and then Zazu standing right behind Maumivu.

"Zazu!" he cried, shocked to see him. "You saved me?"

"Well, it hardly seemed fit to let your perish," Zazu said. "If I left you to die, then I wouldn't have anyone to protect me in this *ghastly* jungle."

"Selfish as that sounds, I'm pleased to see you," Simba said, stepping cautiously over Maumivu's body. "Now, let's find the others—before she wakes up."

Nala, Haiba and Sarafina each felt like they had been running for miles. But in the end, they all ended up in the same spot: right back where they started, in the middle of Jowai Resort.

"I don't believe this," Nala said, backing up against Haiba and her mother. "We've been running in circles."

"That's good for me!" proclaimed Hofu, leaping in front of the three. "Now I can chew all of you to pieces at once! I've never had a lioness *and* cub before! This could be the meal of the century!"

"Well, it's been nice knowing you all," Haiba said. "Nala, would you be disturbed if I told you that I love you *and* your mother?"

"Very."

"Thought so."

Hofu advanced towards them, ready at least to eat...

"Stop right there!" Hofu turned around to see Simba and Zazu arriving on the scene. "I'm not letting you eat my friends!"

"Oh, good," Hofu said, pleased. "Now that we're all accounted for, I can have a real feast! My sister will be so jealous!"

"Don't think you're eating them without me," Maumivu said, suddenly jumping beside her sister.

"I thought I knocked you out!" Zazu exclaimed worriedly.

"Everyone falls for that trick," grinned Maumivu. "It was just to draw all of you into the same spot. Now we can eat... eat all night..."

A sudden thought popped into Simba's head as the two Scavengers closed around him and his friends. It was quite a daring thought—almost ludicrous, in fact—but it just might work. After all, these lionesses weren't exactly mentally stable themselves...

"Wait!" Simba cried, stopping the two Scavengers momentarily. "You're missing the point."

"Huh?" they said, looking at each other bemusedly.

"You don't understand," Simba told them. "You're missing the bigger picture. The most important thing—it's right in front of your noses!"

"What are you talking about?" Maumivu asked.

"What do you *think* I'm talking about?" Simba retorted. "*You*. Have you ever thought about how good a Scavenger would taste? Now that's *really* one of your own kind. Think of the taste."

The two Scavengers suddenly began to stare at each other, as if considering the thought. They'd never tried one of their own kind before...

"It would be delicious," Simba said, enticing them. "Eating each other. *Way* better than any cubs or lionesses. Think about it. The best meal ever."

"Must... eat..." Maumivu drooled, staring at her own sister. She looked so delicious... and the hunger was driving her to desperation. She needed to eat—*now*.

"So... delicious..." moaned Hofu.

Finally—after they could stand it no longer—the two Scavengers leapt at each other, teeth bared, and began to tear each other to shreds.

Nala winced, turning away from the grisly scene as the two sisters attempted to devour each other. Naturally, it had killed them in the process. They were dead by the time they had one mouthful in their stomachs.

"Eww..." Haiba said, disgusted. "Simba, that was genius. *Disgusting*, but genius."

"I know," Simba admitted, just glad that the Scavengers were gone for ever. "But what else could I do? They were going to eat us."

"Kill or be killed," Sarafina said gravely. "That's the way it is out here."

"Well..." Simba sighed, his shoulders sagging. "Let's go home." They began to walk away from the resort.

"Wait," Haiba said. "Aren't you missing something?"

"What?" Simba asked, turning back around.

"We're in Jowai Resort," Haiba said, "and it's *empty*."

"Yeah—they killed everyone," Nala said. "What's your point?"

"*This* can be our home!" he exclaimed eagerly, a grin on his face. "We've got all this space to ourselves! Plus the other half of that food store that we didn't steal. Sure, we'll have to clean up all the blood—but just *look* at this place! It's *perfect*!"

"Hmm..." Simba thought for a moment. "Well, it is a lot better than that cramped little clearing..."

"Exactly," said Haiba, satisfied that he'd made his point. "So it's official. From this day forth, Jowai Resort is now our new home!"

"You know what?" said Nala, smiling at Simba. "I think this is the beginning of something beautiful."

The End

AN: Thank goodness they're not in that dingy little clearing anymore, eh? Our heroes are moving up in the world! And they'll be making even more progress still in the next story, so I'll see you then!

NEXT TIME: Simba, Nala and Haiba learn of a legend that can resurrect the Pride Lands. However, some other cubs are after it too...